

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the application.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) An isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, and
- b) a polypeptide comprising a naturally-occurring amino acid sequence at least 90% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, said polypeptide retaining at least one function of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, and
- ~~c) a biologically-active fragment of a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, said polypeptide retaining at least one function of a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.~~

Claim 2 (Previously presented) An isolated polypeptide of claim 1, comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

Claim 3 (Withdrawn) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 1.

Claim 4 (Withdrawn) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a polypeptide of claim 2.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn) An isolated polynucleotide of claim 4, having a sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn) A recombinant polynucleotide comprising a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide of claim 3.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn) A cell transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide of claim 6.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn) A method for producing a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) culturing a cell under conditions suitable for expression of the polypeptide, wherein said cell is transformed with a recombinant polynucleotide, and said recombinant polynucleotide comprises a promoter sequence operably linked to a polynucleotide encoding the polypeptide of claim 1, and
- b) recovering the polypeptide so expressed.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn) A method of claim 8, wherein the polypeptide has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn) An isolated antibody which specifically binds to a polypeptide of claim 1.

Claim 11 (Withdrawn) An isolated polynucleotide comprising a sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polynucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2,
- b) a naturally-occurring polynucleotide sequence having at least 90% sequence identity to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:2,
- c) a polynucleotide sequence complementary to a),
- d) a polynucleotide sequence complementary to b) and
- e) a ribonucleotide equivalent of a)-d).

Claim 12 (Withdrawn) An isolated polynucleotide comprising at least 60 contiguous nucleic acids of claim 11.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) hybridizing the sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides comprising a sequence complementary to said target polynucleotide in the sample, and which probe specifically hybridizes to said target polynucleotide, under conditions whereby a hybridization complex is formed between said probe and said target polynucleotide or fragments thereof, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said hybridization complex, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn) A method of claim 13, wherein the probe comprises at least 60 contiguous nucleotides.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a target polynucleotide in a sample, said target polynucleotide having a sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) amplifying said target polynucleotide or fragment thereof using polymerase chain reaction amplification, and
- b) detecting the presence or absence of said amplified target polynucleotide or fragment thereof, and, optionally, if present, the amount thereof.

Claim 16 (Previously presented) A composition comprising a polypeptide of claim 1.

Claim 17 (Previously presented) A composition of claim 16, wherein the polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an agonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting agonist activity in the sample.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness as an antagonist of a polypeptide of claim 1, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising a polypeptide of claim 1 to a compound, and
- b) detecting antagonist activity in the sample.

Claim 20 (Withdrawn) A method for screening a compound for effectiveness in altering expression of a target polynucleotide, wherein said target polynucleotide comprises a polynucleotide sequence of claim 11, the method comprising:

- a) exposing a sample comprising the target polynucleotide to a compound, under conditions suitable for the expression of the target polynucleotide,
- b) detecting altered expression of the target polynucleotide, and
- c) comparing the expression of the target polynucleotide in the presence of varying amounts of the compound and in the absence of the compound.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn) A method for assessing toxicity of a test compound, said method comprising:

- a) treating a biological sample containing nucleic acids with the test compound;
- b) hybridizing the nucleic acids of the treated biological sample with a probe comprising at least 20 contiguous nucleotides of a polynucleotide of claim 11 under conditions whereby a specific hybridization complex is formed between said probe and a target polynucleotide in the biological sample, said target polynucleotide comprising a polynucleotide sequence of a polynucleotide of claim 11 or fragment thereof;
- c) quantifying the amount of hybridization complex; and
- d) comparing the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample with the amount of hybridization complex in an untreated biological sample, wherein a difference in the amount of hybridization complex in the treated biological sample is indicative of toxicity of the test compound.